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SUBJECT: TRACKER 24124 - REPORT ON U.S. SPEAKER SALLY
GARDNER REED, SEPTEMBER 18 - 24, 2005

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY: U.S. Speaker Sally Gardner Reed, President of Friends of the Library USA, spent a week in Turkey interacting with library professionals in Istanbul and Ankara September 18-24, 2005. In Istanbul, Ms. Reed delivered the keynote address at a conference that took place at Istanbul Bilgi University on "Libraries as Gateways to the Information Society: Increasing Public Awareness," organized by the Innovative Library Initiatives Promotion Group (ILIPG) in cooperation with the Turkish Librarians Association. Istanbul IRC specialists led a workshop entitled "Lobbying for Libraries"; and IRC Istanbul and IRC Ankara prepared a subject-specific web site and bibliography focusing on the U.S. experience for the participants at the conference and Ankara seminar.

In Ankara, Ms. Reed gave a seminar to 80 public library professionals and government officials on "Advocacy for Public Libraries" at Ankara's main public library, which was attended by the deputy director of the National Library and officials of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, which administers libraries in Turkey. She called on the new Director of the National Library and toured the Library, accompanied by IRO Marge Melun, Ankara IRC Director Figen Sahin, and the Dean of Ankara University's Library School, Turkey's oldest. They also called on the head of the Parliament Library and met with academics from three Ankara universities that have library studies departments.

2. JUSTIFICATION AND OBJECTIVES: This is a pivotal year for Turkey's public libraries, as their control and funding are expected to move from the national Ministry of Culture and Tourism to local government at the municipality level. As a result, "libraries in Turkey are going through a difficult time" and "library professionals are in a state of panic," according to the deputy director of the National Library. Because new administrative procedures have not yet been put in place, there is considerable concern about the immediate future of public libraries among library professionals. With the Istanbul conference, the ILIPG and the Turkish Librarians' Association sought to galvanize librarians, NGOs and the media to launch a proactive campaign to inform the public and to lobby local government officials for increased support and funding. The Ankara seminar provided an opportunity for public library professionals to gain a different perspective on their situation and to see the opportunities that this change opens up for public library support at the community level.

4. AUDIENCES REACHED: An audience of 140 librarians, academicians, NGOs and state and local authorities heard Ms. Reed's keynote presentation in Istanbul, and another 80 public library professionals and government officials attended her seminar in Ankara. With the active participation of the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Istanbul conference received a great deal of media attention. In Ankara, the seminar was attended by the deputy director of the National Library and officials of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

5. RESULTS: Outstanding. The National Library deputy director said Ms. Reed's presentation was "a source of oxygen" that should give public library professionals encouragement and enthusiasm. He said her presentation offered not only a positive perspective but a number of tactics and strategies that will be very helpful to public librarians in Turkey as they go through the transition from national to local government authority. Ms. Reed, a professional librarian with more than twenty years of experience at all levels, was an exceptionally effective speaker. Friends of the Library USA is the preeminent organization in the field of library advocacy. Her presentations were persuasive, practical and inspiring; they elicited excellent questions and comments from the audience. Moreover, she offered to forward a "toolkit for public librarians" that post will translate into Turkish for use by library professionals in organizing advocacy activities.

The conference in Istanbul was significant in that it

brought together NGOs, local administrators and professionals in the field of information science for the first time. This was a major step in establishing cooperation and communication for a sustainable relationship between the relevant parties. Press coverage resulted in articles in all major dailies and the conference was featured in several national TV newscasts.

16. NON-USG SOURCES OF IN-COUNTRY FUNDING: The conference in Istanbul was organized by the Innovative Library Initiatives Promotion Group (ILIPG) in cooperation with the Turkish Librarians Association and Istanbul Bilgi University. In Ankara, the Adnan Otuken City Public Library, Ankara's main public library, co-sponsored the seminar and provided the venue.

17. QUALITY OF U.S. SUPPORT AND AGENCY OFFICE: Outstanding. Post once again thanks Cathy Siemonh at IIP/G/EUR and Gerri Williams in IIP/T/GIC for their support for this project.
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